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ODP
#1
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BARACK
THE BARBARIAN
THE FALL OF
RED SARAH!

BARACK™

THE BARBARIAN

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you've got red on you

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A LEGEND FROM THE TIME BEFORE THE ICE:

BARACK THE BARBARIAN arrived in the mighty, corrupt capital of WARSHINGTUN just in time to wrest leadership from the despots who nearly led the city to ruin—BOOSH THE DIM and his Vizier, HARRY BURDEN. Now he is adventuring through the realm, doing his best to assess the damage and make repairs... and who should he come across but his old adversary! Are they destined to remain enemies, or can Barack and RED SARAH see their common interests to work together...?

THE FALL OF RED SARAH!

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Know, O Prince, that before the glaciers ate the world and the rise of the Sons of Inuit, there was an Age undreamed of, when shining republics lay spread across the earth like warm bison blankets under the stars–

Hither came Barack the Schikhagoan, dark-skinned, gimlet-eyed, sword in hand, glib of tongue, a deal-maker, a slayer of monsters, with unflappable coolness and ironic sensibility...

THOSE WHO VIOLATE THE BAILIWICK OF THE **SENATAURS** MUST **DIE!**

IT'S A GOOD THING THESE OLD COOTS ONLY HAVE THEIR RIGHT WINGS AND CAN'T FLY, OR I'D BE IN REAL TROUBLE--

WHO'S AN OLD COOT?

WE CAN STILL **SHOOT** STRAIGHT!

BUT I CAN BLOCK FASTER.

WHAT'S THIS?

A FAIR DAMSEL PURSUED BY LEFT-LEANING MUTANT WOLVES OF NU-MEDIA?

NO... UPON CLOSER INSPECTION, IT IS NOT A FAIR DAMSEL AT ALL, BUT--

THEY'RE TOO CLOSE TO SHOOT! IF I STOP FIRING MY BOW TO BEAT THEM OFF, THEY'LL BE ALL OVER ME!

--RED SARAH!

THE SENATAURS WON'T COME WITHIN SWORD RANGE OF ME...

...SO HOW ABOUT MAKING A *DEAL*, SARAH?

I'LL DE-WOLF YOU--

--AND YOU GET THE CODGER PATROL OFF MY BACK!

YOU'RE ON, BARACK...

...ALTHOUGH THE EXCHANGE HARDLY SEEMS FAIR.

"AFTER ALL, THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF THEM, AND THEY'RE ON THE DECREPIT SIDE."

THEY MAKE UP FOR IT WITH EVIL AND PERSISTENCE.

YOU SEEM TO HAVE FARED WELL FOR YOURSELF SINCE OUR ADVENTURE IN THE ***ELEPHANT TOWER***.

I DID OKAY EVEN IF THE ***OLD WARRIOR*** DISSED ME...

...I'M A SURVIVOR, YOU BETCHA!

THAT'S A GOOD THING TO BE, ESPECIALLY AS WE ARE APPROACHING THE GATES OF A VAST CITY...

...WHICH IS SITTING IN A WASTELAND WHERE *NO CITY IS SUPPOSED TO BE.*

IT CAN'T HAVE JUST BEEN CLUNKED DOWN HERE--

--AND WHAT'S WITH THOSE CIRCLING VULTURES?

NO SMOKE FROM COOKING FIRES, NO DOGS BARKING, NO CHALLENGE FROM THE PARAPETS--

MAYBE THEY'RE OUT TO LUNCH?

AND THE SCALE OF THE ARCHITECTURE IS DECIDEDLY DECEPTIVE.

AT LEAST THEY LEFT THE FRONT DOOR OPEN.

THIS MUST BE THE MAIN PLAZA AND MARKET.

IT SHOULD BE TEEMING AT THIS HOUR.

SOMETHING IS SO NOT RIGHT ABOUT THIS PLACE...

...SO, I THINK I'M JUST GOING TO SKEDADDLE RIGHT BACK OUT OF HERE!

OR MAYBE NOT!

THE WOLVES AREN'T ATTACKING...

THE SENATAURS HAVE STOPPED AT THE RIDGELINE ALSO. THEY'RE ALL AFRAID OF THIS PLACE...

IT MIGHT BEHOOVE US TO FIND OUT *WHY* THEY WON'T COME IN HERE IF WE INTEND TO STICK AROUND.

ARE YOU NUTS? THAT'S ASKING FOR TROUBLE!

I'M NOT A BIG ONE FOR SURPRISES--

--NOT AFTER THE SUN GOES DOWN.

ERM. YOU HAVE A POINT...

UH, I DON'T THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO SPLIT OUR FORCES!

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS, DIVIDED WE FALL, TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE!

OKAY. JUST DON'T GET IN THE WAY OF MY BACKHAND IF WE HAVE TO THROW DOWN.

AT LEAST THERE'S WATER HERE FOR THE STEEDS.

I'M GOING TO CHECK OUT THAT STREET. WHY DON'T YOU EXPLORE THE STREET ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLAZA?

WHAT'S THAT HORRIBLE SMELL?

LOOK AT THE FOOD STALLS.

OH.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE? WHERE ARE ALL THE *PEOPLE?*

NOT MUCH TO BE LEARNED OUT HERE IN THE NICE SAFE OPEN AREAS...

WAIT--

--YOU'RE NOT GOING INTO THAT DARK *ALLEY*, ARE YOU?

YES. ARE YOU COMING, OR ARE YOU STAYING OUT THERE BY YOURSELF?

THAT WOULD BE, UM, *RUDE*. TO LET YOU GO INTO THE DARK BY YOURSELF, AND--

--OOF!

SHING

FWOOSH

LET'S CAST SOME LIGHT ON THIS SITUATION, SHALL WE?

YUCK!

NOW WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THE PEOPLE.

BUT WHY ARE THEY ALL CLUSTERED IN THIS PART OF THE ALLEY?

MAYBE IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO...

...WITH THIS *DOOR!*

CHAK

WAS THAT THE BACKHAND I WAS SUPPOSED TO WATCH OUT FOR?

MORE BODIES IN HERE, SARAH...

"THIS ONE APPEARS *GNAWED* ON."

"THE *HEART* IS MISSING FROM THIS ONE, BARACK!"

"AND THIS ONE DIED WRITHING IN AGONY."

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

MONSTERS, MAGIC AND PESTILENCE.

THERE ARE MULTIPLE EVILS LURKING IN THIS FOUL PLACE--

A BLOWGUN DART!

OVER *THERE!* FLITTING BETWEEN THE SHADOWS--!

PFFFFFT

THOK

HE'S GOING DOWN THAT CORRIDOR!

WE DON'T KNOW IF HE'S GOT FRIENDS AROUND THE CORNER--!

I DON'T CARE! HE'S *DEAD MEAT!*

HE'S DRAWN US OUT INTO A SPACE WHERE WE HAVE NO COVER!

SO WHAT?

PFFFFFT

TWANG

THIS IS WHAT!

SPANG

THOOP

HA! I GOT HIM GOOD!

WATCH IT! HE'S NOT DEAD--

THESE ARE MORE LIKE BANDAGES THAN CLOTHES.

IT'S SOME FORM OF *PESTILENCE!* OR WORSE—THE *PHLOO!*

Y-YOU'RE ONE OF *THEM!* YOU'RE ON THE *DEATH PANEL!*

YOU'RE OUT TO *KILL US ALL!*

YOU'D LET THE *CLUSTER OWLS* EXPLODE OUR *HEARTS!*

YOU'D LET THE *BIG CEE* EAT US UP!

YOU'D LET THE *PHLOO* MURDER US IN OUR SLEEP!

GAAAAAAAA!

ACK—

YOU'RE NOT DEATH PANELISTS.

...BUT YOU *ARE* SURROUNDED.

LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS! WE MAY KNOW WHAT YOU *AREN'T*, BUT WE DON'T KNOW FOR SURE WHAT YOU *ARE!*

WE ARE STRANGERS HERE SEEKING REFUGE. WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU.

WE WERE ATTACKED AND WE FOUGHT BACK.

KILL THEM!

WE CAN DO THAT AT OUR LEISURE HEAR HIM OUT!

WE ARE IN NO HURRY TO VENTURE BACK OUTSIDE YOUR WALLS WHERE THE PREDATORS AWAIT.

MAYBE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER. MAYBE WE CAN JOIN YOUR FIGHT AGAINST THESE DEATH PANELS YOU FEAR.

BUT TELL US-- HOW DID YOUR CITY FALL INTO THIS DIRE STATE?

THERE WAS ONCE A GREAT MARKET IN THE CENTRAL PLAZA OF THE CITY. IT WAS CALLED THE *BAZAAR OF THE HEALERS.*

"THERE, MENDICANT HEALERS, LEECHES, SAWBONES, TOOTH-PULLERS, HERBALISTS, MAGES, EXORCISTS AND THAUMATURGISTS ALL COULD HAWK THEIR SERVICES, OR DISPLAY THEIR GOODS IN OPEN COMPETITION."

"IN THIS FREE MARKET, THE CITIZENRY COULD PICK AND CHOOSE, AND GET A FAIR DEAL."

"BUT THEN, *AIGH THE USURER* REALIZED THAT APPLYING THE PRACTICES OF HIS OWN TRADE TO MEDICINE WAS THE ROAD TO UNTOLD RICHES."

PSSST! PEOPLE GETTING A FAIR DEAL MEANS WE DON'T MAKE AS MUCH PROFIT. THINK ABOUT IT

JEWESS

EXORCIST

APOTHECARY

"THE COSTS ROSE SO HIGH THAT ONLY THE WEALTHY COULD AFFORD TO BE TREATED BY THE QUACKSOLVERS."

". OR PURCHASE PROTECTIVE SPELLS AGAINST MYSTIC CREATURES OR INFERNAL BEINGS."

"THE POOR--WELL, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN USED TO DOING WITHOUT."

AND SO YOU SEE, WHAT HAS BECOME OF THIS CITY THAT USED TO BE VIBRANT AND FULL OF LIFE.

I DON'T SEE THE PROBLEM. IT'S JUST *BUSINESS*, RIGHT? NOTHING WRONG IN TURNING A PROFIT!

EVEN IF IT INVOLVES TRADING IN HUMAN MISERY?

YOU CAN'T HAVE WINNERS WITHOUT LOSERS, BUDDY.

IN OUR CITY, THERE WERE ONLY A HANDFUL OF WINNERS. EVERYBODY ELSE BECAME A LOSER.

PEOPLE HAD TO PAY AN ENORMOUS PERCENTAGE OF THEIR INCOME FOR THE SIMPLEST OF MEDICINES.

THE SICK AND DYING TURNED TO SORCERY IN DESPERATION...

...AND THE PORTALS TO HORRIFIC NETHER REALMS WERE OPENED. UNSPEAKABLE THINGS PASSED INTO OUR WORLD.

"*CLUSTER OWLS* MYSTICALLY CLOGGED THE ARTERIES OF THEIR VICTIMS BEFORE THEY TORE OUT THEIR HEARTS."

"THE *BIG CEE* PROWLED THE STREETS, DEVOURING ALL IN ITS PATH."

WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU IS ALL THERE IS OF THE ORGANIZED RESISTANCE.

OPTING TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE US MIGHT SEEM FUTILE, BUT TO DO NOTHING IS, WELL—*MORE* THAN FUTILE, IF THERE CAN BE SUCH A THING

I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT SIDING WITH LOSERS!

THE ALTERNATIVE IS ACCEPTING AN INEVITABLE DOOM... OR DENYING IT.

IT'S BETTER TO FIGHT.

RUN! HIDE! THEY'RE COMING...! THE DISRUPTORS!

THE WHO?

WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?

I THINK HE WAS REACTING TO THE ARRIVAL OF THOSE THINGS OVER THERE...

...THE ONES ALL COVERED WITH GRASS, AND BRISTLING WITH ROOTS!

LOOKS KIND OF FAKE TO ME, SARAH.

.. LIKE ORDINARY YAHOOS PLAYING DRESS-UP.

THE KIND WHO YELL "OUCH" WHEN YOU--

THUMP

HE'S COMING AROUND! HE'S NOT DEAD AFTER ALL!

HE'S GOT A PARTICULARLY HARD HEAD, THIS OUTLANDER...

BE THAT AS IT MAY, HMO—WE SHOULD HAVE THE DISRUPTORS STAND BY TO GIVE HIM ANOTHER CLOUT IF HE GETS OBSTREPEROUS.

A WISE PRECAUTION, AIGH! VERY WISE, INDEED!

YOU THERE! WHO ARE YOU, AND WHY WERE YOU STIRRING UP THE RABBLE?

FORGET THE QUESTIONS, AIGH! LET'S JUST *DISSECT* HIM!

AIGH? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SOLD OUT YOUR FELLOW CITIZENS FOR A HANDFUL OF SILVER?

HEAVEN FORFEND! NO, NO *NO! NEVER!* NOT FOR A HANDFUL OF *SILVER*..

...NO, IT WAS FOR METRIC *TONS* OF PURE *GOLD!*

SACKS AND SACKS OF THE YELLOW STUFF! MORE THAN EVEN I COULD *COUNT!*

BUT WHEN I GOT INTO CAHOOTS WITH OLD HMO, HERE, AND OUR OTHER PAL, *PFFARM*--

--WE ALL RAKED IN EVEN *MORE!!*

HA HA HA!

HAHA HA!

YOU'VE ENRICHED YOURSELVES BY SEEING TO IT THAT ONLY THE WEALTHY CAN AFFORD HEALTH CARE?

HAVE YOU NO CONSCIENCE?

CONSCIENCE? DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN *FREE ENTERPRISE* AND ALLOWING THE MARKET TO REGULATE *ITSELF??*

WHAT ARE YOU, A *SOCIALIST?*

PUNT

THROW HIM IN THE DEEPEST DUNGEON!

COME ON, HMO--LET'S GO SEE HOW PFFARM IS DOING INTERROGATING THE *GIRL!*

. AND SO, YOU SEE, THE DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN MY NET AND EXTRAPOLATED QUARTERLY EARNINGS ACCORDING TO THE QUALITY OF WRETCHED EXCESS INDEX WAS EGREGIOUS TO SAY THE LEAST...

.. SO YOU CAN SEE HOW IT WAS QUITE NECESSARY TO ALTER THE BUSINESS PLAN TO OPTIMIZE RETURNS ON INVESTMENT TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE SIZEABLE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS, HMM?

WELL, GOLLY! THAT IS CERTAINLY UNDER-STANDABLE, AND I WANT YOU TO KNOW. .

...THAT I TAKE YOUR CONCERNS VERY SERIOUSLY. IF YOU HAVE AN EXTRA NEEDLE, I CAN HELP YOU MEND THAT ***NET*** OF YOURS IN NO TIME AT ALL, IF YOU WOULD JUST UNCHAIN ME FROM THIS--

I'M NOT ***REALLY*** AN EVIL MUTANT SPIDER! I HAVE ***FEELINGS!***

YOU BETCHA! WHAT YOU NEED IS A BIG HUG! UNCHAIN ME AND I CAN MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER IN A JIFFY!

UM-- OKAY...

THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF NET I'M TALKING ABOUT, YOU NINNY! I AM TRYING TO EXPLAIN MY RATIONALIZATION PROCESS!

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, PFFARM?

YOU WEREN'T ABOUT TO *UNTIE* HER, WERE YOU?

WHO *ME*? I *NEVER!* I WAS *TIGHTENING* HER RESTRAINTS! *YES!* THAT'S WHAT I WAS DOING--

YOU WERE GOING TO LET HER GO! AND HERE WE WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO *BOILING* HER IN SAUERKRAUT JUICE!

IT WAS GOING TO BE A PRELUDE TO THE NASTINESS WE WERE PLANNING FOR HER FRIEND THE DISRUPTORS ARE DRAGGING DOWN TO THE DUNGEON!

HE'S NO FRIEND OF *MINE!*

WHY, HE'S A NO-GOOD FOREIGNER, AND PROBABLY A TROUBLE-MAKING REFORMER AS WELL!

WHY, HE'S PROBABLY STIRRING UP TROUBLE DOWN IN THE DUNGEON EVEN AS WE SPEAK!

YES? WHAT *ELSE* CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT HIM?

LET'S BOIL HER ANYWAY!

YOU'RE GONNA LOVE IT DOWN HERE, OUTLANDER!

IT'S DARK, DANK AND DISMAL.

..PERFECT FOR LONG-TERM LANGUISHING!

KA-SHUNK

FORGET IT, STRANGER! THE ONLY WAY YOU'RE GOING OUT THAT DOOR IS WHEN THEY DRAG YOUR COLD BODY OUT!

KRNCH

WHO SAID THAT?

I DID.

YOU CAN CALL ME CURLY.

SAY, YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE A SPARE ***SPOON*** ON YOU, WOULDJA? MINE GOT SORTA WORN OUT.

YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN DIGGING THIS ***TUNNEL*** UNDER THE CELL FOR TEN YEARS, AND LET ME TELL YOU, SCRAPING THROUGH HARD CLAY AND ROCK IS MIGHTY ROUGH ON THE SILVERWARE!

I USED TO BE ON THE CITY COUNCIL, AND I OBJECTED TO WHAT AIGH, HMO AND PFFARM WERE DOING.

SO, I WAS MADE TO ***DISAPPEAR*** ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHERS WHO OPPOSED THE TRIUMVIRATE.

HMMMM..

HEY!

RAKKAP

WHATCHA DOIN' WITH MY SPOON? AND WHY'D YA RIP MY ***RAGS?***

...AND FURTHERMORE, AFTER HE GETS OUT AND SETS ALL THE OTHER PRISONERS FREE, HE'S GONNA *ORGANIZE* AND LEAD THEM ALL BACK UP HERE TO TAR AND FEATHER ALL THREE OF YOU AND RUN YOU OUT OF TOWN ON A RAIL!

I *LIKE* TAR AND FEATHERS. .

WE WON'T GIVE HIM THE CHANCE! WE'RE GOING DOWN THERE AND CHOP HIS HEAD OFF LICKETY-SPLIT!

THAT'LL FIX HIM!

WHAT IF SHE'S *LYING?*

WE'LL TAKE HER WITH US. IF SHE'S LYING, WE'LL CHOP *HER* HEAD OFF FIRST!

HAR! I LIKE THIS BUMPITY-BUMP PART!

CLUNK

CLONK

CLUNK

BUNK

OW!

OOF!

YOWCH!

UGH!

OW!

THIS IS NOT GOOD.
WHY ARE ALL THE CELL DOORS OPEN?
COULD IT BE ?
--YES! THEY'VE ALL ESCAPED!! EVERY CELL IS EMPTY!
BUT HOW COULD THEY UNLOCK THE DOORS?
THAT'S HOW! A BENT SPOON AND UNRAVELED RAGS!
ARRGH! THAT TROUBLEMAKER COULD BRING US ALL DOWN!
WE'LL LOSE BILLIONS!
I CAN STOP HIM FOR YOU.
JUST GIVE ME BACK MY WEAPONS.

I WAS THE CITY COUNCILMAN IN CHARGE OF SUBTERRANEAN INFRASTRUCTURE, SO I KNOW THAT THIS GALLERY LEADS TO AN OPENING INTO THE SEWER SYSTEM...

I CAN TELL BY THE SMELL, CURLY.

I THINK WE'VE FOUND IT, BUT OUR ESCAPE ROUTE IS COVERED BY A BIG IRON GRATE AND GUARDED BY TWO SOD-COVERED GOONS.

ULP! MAYBE WE CAN REASON WITH THE GUARDS?

YOU CAN'T REASON WITH A GRASS-ROOTS DISRUPTOR! THEY'RE WRAITHS WITH NO BRAINS!

THEY CAN SPEAK AND OBEY ORDERS, SO THERE HAS TO BE A DEGREE OF COGITATION TRANSPIRING UNDER THEIR CRANIAL TURF...

OKAY, HERE'S THE PLAN--

HOLD ON--WHO THE HECK ARE *YOU*, BUB?

YOU DON'T SMELL LIKE ONE OF *US*.

JAIL *BREAK!* ALL THE PRISONERS *ESCAPED!* YOU HAVE TO *STOP* THEM!

THAT'S A RELIEF.

OUTTA OUR WAY, YA LOUSY **SCREWS!** WE ARE SO **GONE!**

HUH?

RIGHT ON TIME. .

LET'S SEE IF MASSIVE TRAUMA TO THE FIFTH CERVICAL VERTEBRA IS AS EFFECTIVE AS WEED-KILLER ON THESE TWERPS!

WHUMP

THUMP

ARM YOURSELVES! WE'RE NOT OUT OF THIS YET!

THESE DISRUPTORS ARE JUST ORDINARY MEN WEARING GRASS CAPES! THE ROOTS ARE JUST GLUED TO THEIR CHESTS!

I KNEW THAT ALL ALONG! GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS WINCH!

NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE, BUT WE'RE STILL STUCK IN THE CASTLE MOAT. THE SIDES ARE TOO STEEP TO CLIMB...

AT LEAST THE SUN IS ABOUT TO SET AND WE'LL BE UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS-- BUT WHY DOES THAT BOTHER ME. ?

WE NEED TO FIND STAIRS TO GET OUT OF THIS MOAT-CURLY, DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE THEY ARE?

STAIRS! RIGHT! ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOAT THIS WAY!

NOW, WHAT WAS I TRYING TO REMEMBER ABOUT NIGHT AND DARKNESS...?

THE SUN HAS SET..

HA! I KNEW THEY WOULD GO THIS WAY!

NOW, WE HAVE THEM!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? FOLLOW ME--!

NO! DON'T GO OUT THERE! NIGHT HAS FALLEN!

BEST TO MAKE SURE THIS GATE IS CLOSED!

SLAM

THEY COME OUT AT NIGHT!

THAT'S WHEN THEY ATTACK!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I REMEMBER NOW! WE SHOULDN'T BE OUT IN THE OPEN AT NIGHT! WE'RE ALL SITTING DUCKS FOR..

"...THE CLUSTER OWLS!!"

SKREEE

OWW! I'VE GOT A SHOOTING PAIN UP MY LEFT ARM--!

I HAVE TROUBLE BREATHING--!

ARRRRRRGHH!

SCHRRRRRIPP

THEY'RE INSATIABLE! AFTER THEY ATTACK THE HEARTS OF THE FAT ONES, THEY'LL GO AFTER THE ONES WHO WORRY A LOT!

HAND ME YOUR SWORD AND GET OUT OF THE WAY. .

...LET ME HANDLE THIS!

ZASH

BASH

KER-SHUNK

WHACK

THWACK

GWWASSH

SCHRAAING

THANKS FOR THE LOANER...

NOW, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

THE CLUSTER OWLS HAVE PROBABLY FINISHED OFF THE OUTLANDER AND THE OTHER ESCAPEES BY NOW, SO WHY DO WE NEED *HER* ANY LONGER?

WE GAVE HER BACK HER *WEAPONS!* IT'S NOT SO EASY NOW!

SHE KNOWS WHERE THE OTHER REBELS CONGREGATE. BEST TO WRING HER OF ALL SHE KNOWS *BEFORE* WE SLIP HER THE POISONED MARGARITA.

IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?

OH, *YES!* CERTAINLY!

WE WERE JUST DISCUSSING HOW GENEROUS YOUR *BONUS* WILL BE!

WE WERE? OH, YES--WE *WERE!*

SO AFTER SHE SPILLS THE BEANS, PFFARM GRABS HER, PINS HER ARMS, AND HMO, YOU BASH HER BRAINS IN WITH YOUR STAFF.

I HAVE TO BASH HER? ISN'T THAT WHAT WE HAVE THE DISRUPTORS FOR?

EXCUSE ME! I JUST WENT OUT TO CLEAN THE MOAT, AND IT'S FULL OF DEAD CLUSTER OWLS...

UM... ANYBODY GOT AN EXTRA-LARGE ROASTING PAN?

WHAT? THE CLUSTER OWLS ARE *DEAD?*

WTFF!

THE ESCAPEES HAVE *ABSCONDED?*

THE OWLS GOT A FEW, BUT MOST GOT AWAY. THEY'RE PROBABLY HEADING FOR REBEL HEADQUARTERS.

SOME OF THEM USED TO BE OUR *ACCOUNTANTS!* THEY KNOW ALL THE *DIRT!*

SOME OF THEM WERE *PHYSICIANS* WHO OBJECTED TO OUR PLANS!

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO *DO?*

AHEM.

. YOU WERE SAYING, ABOUT THAT *BONUS*-- I'D KINDA LIKE THAT IN GOLD AND DIAMONDS, AND IN *ADVANCE*, PLEASE.

...AND THAT'S HOW AIGH, HMO AND PFFARM HOODWINKED EVERYBODY, MADE THEMSELVES RICH, SOLD THE REST OF US DOWN THE RIVER AND GOT AWAY WITH IT COMPLETELY!

WELL, THEY'RE NOT GOING TO GET AWAY WITH IT ANY LONGER!

THAT'S *RIGHT!* AND *HERE'S* THE MAN WHO CAN LEAD US IN OUR FIGHT TO OVERTURN THE HEGEMONY OF THE EVIL TRIUMVIRATE AND DELIVER US INTO A PARADISE OF HEALTHY LIVING!

OKAY, I'LL LEAD YOU, BUT WHO HERE IS WILLING TO PUT THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE FOR REAL *CHANGE?*

WHO WILL FOLLOW ME ON AN ASSAULT ON THE CITADEL OF THE TRIUMVIRATE?

SO BE IT.

IF THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE TO WORK WITH, THIS IS WHAT WE'LL WORK WITH.

BE SURE YOU BOYS DISTRIBUTE THE LOAD ON MY ELEPHANT *EVENLY!*

I DON'T WANT HIM GETTING A *HERNIA!*

SEEING ALL THAT CASH GOING *OUT* INSTEAD OF COMING IN IS TOO *STRESSFUL!*

HURRY UP! WE HAD TO LEAVE THE CITADEL DOORS OPEN TO FACILITATE THIS DAISY CHAIN!

THE DOORS ARE *OPEN??* WHAT IF--?

UM, PROBLEM AT THE CITADEL.

THE OUTLANDER AND THE REBELS HAVE SEIZED THE CITADEL AND OPENED IT UP TO THE CITIZENRY, WHO ARE LOOTING THE REMAINDER OF THE TREASURY AND STEALING THE FURNITURE AND SILVER!

WE HAVE TO GET BACK THERE AND STOP IT AT ONCE!

IT'S A GOOD THING WE HAVE THIS SWORD-WENCH IN OUR EMPLOY NOW!

SHE MUST HIE FORTHWITH AND THRASH HIM MOST UNMERCIFULLY!

OKIE-DOKIE! YOU JUST RUN ON AHEAD

I'LL BE THERE JUST AS SOON AS I FINISH LOADING UP!

UH--THIS ISN'T EXACTLY WHAT I HAD IN MIND ABOUT *CHANGE*..

WHATTA-YAMEAN? THIS IS *GOOD* CHANGE! BEFORE, *THEY* HAD IT *ALL* AND WE HAD *NOTHING!* NOW, WE ALL GET A *TASTE!*

WOW! DID I SCORE *BIG TIME!*

GET OUT OF MY WAY! GOT NO TIME FOR IDLE CHITCHAT!

WHAT'S THE HURRY, CURLY?

DON'T WANT TO BE OUT THERE WITH "YOU-KNOW WHO" PERAMBULATING ABOUT, DO WE?

WHO?

YOU KNOW--THE *BIG CEE!*

NOTHING CAN SAVE US NOW!

IT'S SEEN US!

IS THAT THE BIG CEE?

YOU BET YOUR BIPPY!

MOMMY!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!

UH-OH!

¡OOOW!

I DON'T GIVE UP THAT EASILY!

KA-CHAK

HELP!

CHONK

GOT YOU COVERED, CURLY!

NGH!

LEGGO MY SWORD, YOU!

THIS IS A BAD PLACE TO BE!

AS LONG AS IT CAN *SEE* US...

...WHICH IS SOMETHING I AM GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT--

SNACK

--RIGHT NOW!

SNICK

NOW YOU DID IT! IT'S OUT OF CONTROL!

BUT IT'S FLAILING IN THE *DARK*...

...AND *I'VE* GOT A *PLAN!*

IT'S A VARIATION ON THE OLD SHELL GAME.

KA-CHUNK

KA-CHACK

PA-CHING

BUT INSTEAD OF FINDING A *PEA* BENEATH THE SHELL...

CHOONK

...I FIND THE *BRAIN!*

IF THIS DOESN'T HURT LIKE CRAZY..

.. IT WILL AT LEAST MAKE IT SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE!

HOO-HA! THAT GOT IT RILED UP ALL RIGHT!

DO SOMETHING *ELSE* AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

LET'S SEE WHAT *THIS* DOES--

YOU CAN *STEER* IT! WHERE ARE WE GOING?

YOU TELL ME! I'M A STRANGER IN TOWN, REMEMBER?

HOW MUCH FURTHER IS IT?

I'M NOT USED TO BEING OUT ON THE STREETS!

IT'S JUST AROUND THE NEXT CORNER, THEN STRAIGHT DOWN THE AVENUE TO-

THAT'S IT! I QUIT! I DON'T NEED THIS!

EYAAAAA!

ACK! OFFER IT MONEY!

IT DOESN'T WANT MONEY...

.. IT WANTS SOMETHING FAT AND JUICY!

YOU DON'T WANT ME! I HAVE ITCHY SCALY SKIN, POST NASAL DRIP AND HEMORRHOIDS!

SPONK

I'M STEERING IT OUT THE CITY GATES!

GET READY TO JUMP, CURLY!

I CAN'T!

SURE YOU CAN!

HOPE IT'S GOT A TASTE FOR *SENATAURS* AND *NU-MEDIAN WOLVES.*

WHAT ARE THOSE OTHER TRACKS LEADING AWAY FROM THE CITY?

ELEPHANT.

AND HEAVILY LADEN, AS WELL.

LOOKS LIKE SARAH MADE A DEAL WITH THE TRIUMVIRATE AND SKIPPED OUT ON THEM LIKE THE MAVERICK SHE IS...

...AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S TIME FOR ME AND MY DONKEY TO HIT THE TRAIL AS WELL--

BAD NEWS!

WHAT NOW?

AN ANGRY MOB IS NOW BESIEGING THE CITADEL!

WHAT? ARE THESE NEW GRIEVANCES?

ALL THE DOCTORS, SHAMANS AND MENDICANT HEALERS WHO ARE NO LONGER BEING MONOPOLIZED BY THE RICH HAVE ALL HUNG OUT THEIR SHINGLES IN THE BAZAAR OF THE HEALERS AGAIN.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?

SOME OF THE HEALERS WANT TO GO INTO BUSINESS WITH A PARTNER AND HANG *TWO* SHINGLES ON A SINGLE SIGNPOST.

THERE ARE DIE-HARDS WHO LIKE THE OLD SYSTEM BETTER AND OPPOSE THIS NEW-FANGLED IDEA VEHEMENTLY--

THEY WON'T SUPPORT A ***SHINGLE PAIR SYSTEM!***

THESE TRACKS TELL THEIR OWN STORY.

SENATAURS AND WOLVES TRAILING THE ELEPHANT.

PROBABLY TOO INTENT ON THEIR PREY TO NOTICE SOMETHING CRUSTACEAN SCUTTLING UP BEHIND THEM.

AND HERE'S WHERE ALL THEIR PATHS CROSSED.

THERE'S THE ELEPHANT, THE SENATAURS AND THE NU-MEDIAN WOLVES, BUT WHERE'S ***RED SARAH...?***

"...AND WHERE'S WHATEVER IT WAS THAT THE ELEPHANT WAS LADEN WITH?"

END.

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